

II. Remarks

Claims 1-9 are pending in this application. The present amendment amends claims 1, 5 and 9 to more particularly point out and clarify Applicants' invention. No new matter has been added by the present amendment. Reconsideration of the application in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Objections

Claim 5 was objected to because of an informality. Applicants have amended claim 5 by replacing "wherein one or more of the end-outlet and side-outlet apertures is arranged" with "wherein at least one of the end-outlet and side-outlet apertures arranged." This amendment was in response to the objection that the corresponding recited change was required. Accordingly, Applicants believe that this amendment has cured the respective objection.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as their invention. Applicants have amended claim 9 to be dependent upon claim 7, so as to clarify that the claimed axis of the first linear region is 90 degrees to the axis of second linear region. This amendment was in response to the rejection that it was unclear how the axis of the first linear region is both 45 degrees and 90 degrees to

the axis of the second linear region. Accordingly, Applicants' believe that this amendment has cured the respective rejection.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4, 6, 7 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,877,771 issued to Weber ("Weber"). Weber was filed on December 13, 2002 and has a corresponding 102(e) date of December 13, 2002. Applicants' application claims priority to PCT/SE2003/000909, filed on June 4, 2003, which claims priority to Great Britain Application No. GB 0216211.3, filed on July 12, 2002. Thus, Applicants' application has a priority date of July 12, 2002 which precedes the 102(e) date of Weber. Therefore, Weber does not constitute prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). Accordingly, the 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) rejection of claims 1-4, 6, 7 and 9 is improper and should be withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 5 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Weber. For the reasons noted in the foregoing paragraph, Weber does not constitute prior art under § 102(e), and is therefore precluded from being used as prior art for a 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejection. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 5 and 8 over Weber is improper and should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-4 and 6-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Publication No. 2001/0019201 issued to Masuda ("Masuda"). The rejection of claims 1-4 and 6-8 are traversed.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to further recite that the gas supply duct is rigid and extends from the gas generator through an inlet sleeve of the inflatable element and into the interior volume of the inflatable element so as to direct gas from the gas generator to the first chamber through the end-outlet aperture and direct gas from the gas generator to the second chamber through the second-outlet aperture. Support for this amendment can be found in paragraphs [0025] and [0026] and Figures 1-4.

Masuda discloses an air-bag 1 for protecting a vehicle occupant's head. The air-bag 1 includes an occupant-side sheet 2 and a door-side sheet 3 superposed on each other and sewn together to define chambers 10-14. *Masuda* at paragraph [0030]. A cylindrical member 20 is disposed between the upper portion of the sheets 2 and 3. The cylindrical member 20 is a flexible fabric sheet folded longitudinally and sewn together with the sheets 2 and 3 by stitching 5. The cylindrical member 20 has a rear end 21 and an open front end 24 positioned above chamber 13. The open front end 24 has a diameter which is equal to the diameter of the cylindrical member 20. An opening 22 faces chamber 11 and an opening 23 faces chamber 12. *Id.* at paragraphs [0037]-[0038] and Figure 1. When the vehicle is involved in a collision, the inflator is actuated so that gas flows into the cylindrical member 20 through the rear end 21. The gas flows inside the cylindrical member and partially enters into chambers 11, 12 through openings 22 and 23 so as to inflate chambers 11 and 12. The gas partially enters into the chambers 13 and 14 by the open front end 24 of the cylindrical member 20 so as to inflate the chambers 13 and 14. *Id.* at paragraph [0043]. Thus, the cylindrical

member 20 of Masuda is a flexible duct that is integrally formed with the inflatable element by a joining seam 5. Moreover, the cylindrical element 20 has an open front end 24 with a diameter equal to the bore diameter of the cylindrical member 20.

This is unlike Applicants' invention as recited in claim 1 where the gas supply duct is rigid and extends through an inlet sleeve of the inflatable element into the interior volume of the inflatable element. Moreover, the gas supply duct has an end-outlet aperture with a diameter smaller than the bore diameter of the gas-supply duct. In that Masuda lacks the noted elements of claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection based thereon should be withdrawn. Accordingly, Applicants believe claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-4 and 6-8 are in a condition for allowance.

Furthermore, the air-bag of Masuda does not operate as Applicants' invention. Applicants' invention is concerned with rapidly inflating a multi-chamber air-bag by directing very aggressive flowing gas without damaging the inflatable curtain. Applicant's application at paragraph [0005]. Specifically, by using a rigid duct which extends into the inflatable element through an inlet sleeve, the flow of gas can be directed through the end-outlet aperture and the side aperture without directly impinging on seams of the inflatable element. *Id.* at paragraph [0030]. Also, by having the end-outlet aperture with a diameter smaller than the bore of the gas-supply duct, a throttling effect occurs, ensuring sufficient flow of the gas through the side aperture so as to rapidly inflate the corresponding chambers. *Id.* at [0028].

The cylindrical member of Masuda has a seam integrally formed with the inflatable element. This seam is directly impinged by the inflating gas. Moreover, the open front end of the cylindrical element does not have a smaller diameter than the bore diameter of the cylindrical element, and thus, does not ensure sufficient flow of the gas through openings 22 and 23 for rapid inflation of the inflatable element. Furthermore, a seam would be required to modify the flexible fabric cylindrical member to form an open front end having a diameter smaller than bore diameter of the cylindrical member. This seam would also be directly impinged by the aggressive flow of gas. In that the air-bag of Masuda does not operate as Applicants' invention, the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claims 1-4 and 6-8 should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present form of the claims are patentably distinguishable over the art of record and that this application is now in condition for allowance. Such action is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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